

# Empathic Listening and the Power of Empathy

We tend to give advice or reassurance or explain our own feelings instead of offering empathy. The power of empathy lies in the offering of our presence and giving others the time and space to express themselves fully and feel understood.

*“The key ingredient of empathy is presence; we are wholly present with the other party and what they are experiencing. This quality of presence distinguishes empathy from either mental understanding or sympathy.” - Marshall Rosenberg*

## Ways of Listening

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### Classical NVC

- Guessing feelings and needs using “are you feeling \_\_\_\_\_ because you’re needing/wanting \_\_\_\_\_?”

### Silent Presence

- Nonverbally tuning in to what is alive in the speaker. Offering your full presence.

### Natural Language (Street Giraffe)

- Guessing feels and needs using everyday words and tone.

### Intuitive Empathy

- Using metaphors/images to make guesses at the speaker’s experience and their needs.

## Principles for Listening (Giving Empathy)

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1. **We need empathy to give empathy.** Don’t forget to apply your oxygen mask first.
2. **Listen for the needs and feelings underneath the speakers words, rather than what they are thinking.** What someone says is less important than what matters to them.
3. **Listening is about presence not words.** “Don’t just do something, stand there.” - Buddhist phrase
4. **Listening is about witnessing, not fixing.** Ask before you offer any type of advice or reassurance.
5. **Listening is about curiosity, not “getting it right.”** The speaker is the authority on their experience. Sometimes the guesses that don’t land are more important than the ones that do.